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CANADIAN LIFE IN THE COUNTRY FIFTY YEARS AGO.

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II.

IN the 'Fifty Years Since' of Canada, concerning which we wrote certain recollections in the January number of THE MONTHLY, visiting for the older folk and sleigh-riding for the younger were the principal amusements of the winter. The life then led was very plain and uneventful. There was no ostentatious display, or assumption of superiority by the 'first families,' indeed, there was no room for the lines of demarcation which exist in these days. All had to struggle for a home and home comforts, and if some had been more successful in the rough battle of pioneer-life than others, they saw no reason why they should be elated or puffed up over it. Neighbours were too scarce to be coldly or haughtily treated. They had hewn their way side by side into the fastness of the Canadian bush, and therefore stood on one common level. But few superfluities could either be found in their houses or on their persons. Their dress was of home-made fabric, plain, often coarse, but substantial and comfortable. Their manners were cordial

and hearty, even to brusqueness, but they were true friends and honest counsellors, rejoicing with their neighbour in prosperity, and sympathising when days of darkness visited their home. Modern refinement had not crept into their domestic circle to disturb it with shams and pretensions. Fashion had no Court wherein to judicate in dress. Time-worn styles of dress and living were considered the best, and hence there was no rivalry or foolish display in either. Both old and young enjoyed an evening at a friend's house, where they were sure to be welcomed, and where a well-supplied table always greeted them. The home amusements were very limited; music with its refining power was uncultivated and indeed almost unknown. There were no musical instruments, unless some wandering fiddler happened to come along to delight both old and young with his crazy instrument; but there were no critical ears, to detect discordant sounds or be displeased with the poor execution of the rambling musician. The young folk would